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Louise Douglas Morrison

"Time present and time past
Are both present in time future
And time future contained in time past."
Thomas Stearns Eliot

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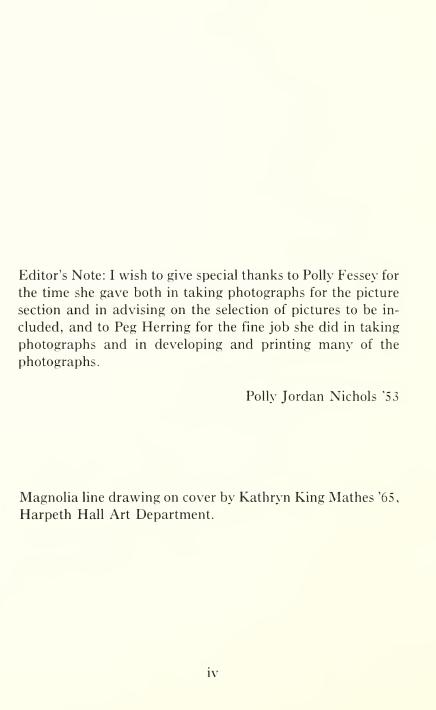
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First Printing

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My warmest thanks go to those who have generously shared their reminiscences about Harpeth Hall, to the Auxiliary which has made the writing and the publishing of this history possible, and to Polly Jordan Nichols, alumnae director, for her editorial expertise.

Louise Douglas Morrison



FOREWORD

Louise Morrison has given us a vivid picture of the transition of a legendary institution from greatness in one form to leadership in another. The evolution of Ward-Belmont School into Harpeth Hall School demonstrates what can be done when a need is thrust upon a community. The essence and soul of Ward-Belmont School was not a loss we could afford. Thus its preservation and growth through Harpeth Hall became a vital asset in the developing of generations of young minds.

The achievement record of the graduates during the first thirty years is significant evidence of the respected position Harpeth Hall has earned in our educational system. This status was attained in a large part through the blessing of exceptionally gifted and dedicated leadership. Just as any organization is only as good as those who lead it, the caliber of the student body and the graduates reflects the influence of Susan S. Souby and Idanelle McMurry. Their guidance and vision exposed the students to a wide range of cultural, social, and academic values, thus equipping them with the skills to meet the challenges of an ever changing and complex world. With an eye on the future and inspiration from the past we can only look ahead to a continued sharing of the benefits of a century of experience in the education of young women.

Daugh W. Smith, M.D. Chairman Emeritus of the Board of Trustees, The Harpeth Hall School

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In the early morning of February 28, 1951, Miss Catherine E. Morrison, Miss Margaret Newhall and Mrs. Claiborne (Henriette) Bryan walked from their home on Shackleford Drive. They were on the way to take the bus to perform their duties as physical education director, librarian and club village hostess, respectively, at Ward-Belmont, the boarding and day school for girls, a landmark on the educational scene in Nashville, Tennessee. (Mrs. Bryan had earlier served as manager of the Student Bank and Book Store and also as registrar.)

As often happened, a gentleman whom they knew stopped to give them a ride in his car. After the threesome had settled themselves, he greeted them cheerily, "Well, I suppose you ladies will be out looking for a job. The morning paper says that Ward-Belmont has been sold."

Ward-Belmont sold!

To the trio this overwhelming news produced a reaction of total disbelief which was to repeat itself in countless hearts throughout Nashville. Word of the sale flew instantaneously on excited tongues, transmitting an actual sense of community disaster.

Ward-Belmont stood serenely and majestically on Belmont Boulevard, a tradition-filled school established at Belmont, the estate which Colonel Joseph Alexander Smith Acklen built in 1850 for his bride, Adelicia Hayes Franklin, widow

of Isaac Franklin. William Strickland, noted architect of the Greek Revival period, designed the exceptionally distinctive town house with a facade composed of two one-story porticos of the Corinthian style.

The ante-bellum home contained a large-scale entrance hall with plush red carpets, free-standing columns and a divided staircase. An antique clock stood on the landing of the staircase. A double colonnade adorned the elaborate ballroom.

Italian statues graced the green lawn. Not far from the residence a fountain played in liquid fashion.

The role of the Southern mansion as a school began in 1890 as Belmont Collegiate and Preparatory School, operated by Miss Ida E. Hood and Miss Susan Heron. In 1912 Ward Seminary, founded by the Reverend William E. Ward in 1865 on elite Spruce Street (Eighth Avenue) in downtown Nashville, united with Belmont. The resulting merger produced Ward-Belmont School, the academic haven for daughters of fashionable families for almost one half a century.

And now the distinguished institution for women's education faced an uncertain doom.

The morning paper had carried the story of the purchase of this independent school for girls by the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Plans indicated that an announcement was to be made to faculty and to students in the school auditorium on this already momentous day. The ever-alert press, however, was the first to spread the word which thunderstruck the thousands who looked upon Ward-Belmont as an enduring institution.

William (Bill) Waller, a Nashville attorney who was to become first chairman of the Board of Harpeth Hall, recalled the stunning news of the sale, "People were numbed for a while."

Ellen Russell (Mrs. Robert N.) Sadler, a member of Harpeth Hall's first freshman class, remembered the notable event. "Ward-Belmont's closing was like the death of a dear friend. It was gone," she said.

The simple facts of the case included the \$600,000 purchase price paid by the Tennessee Baptist Convention for the whole school. This even covered the silver services in the club houses which dotted the southern end of the historic campus.

The hard truth of financial distress, snowballing secretly,

had overcome all other aspects concerning this beloved community landmark, long dedicated to the tradition of fostering culture and enlightenment in its countless female students.

Public handling outside the limits of those nearest the school seemed to desecrate further the whole episode which rocked the city on that memorable morning.

Among the faculty members dismayed by the sale, Miss Patty Chadwell recalled, "Nobody on the faculty had any inkling that any of that was going on. It was all done secretly, and we wished that they [the administration] had spoken about it."

"That spring," she remembered in an interview, "the Big Freeze [the ice storm that paralyzed Nashville in the winter of 1951] was what everybody talked about and then Ward-Belmont."

"Let's see what we can do about it . . ." this became the by-word of Ward-Belmont lovers who suffered a great sense of loss about the demise of the school.

The first to take up the torch was the alumnae group about which Patty, as president at that time, said, "We were not a very active group until this happened. Then everybody got activated. Our idea was that if we could raise enough money, we could buy the school back from the Baptist Convention."

As a major campaign to save Ward-Belmont from extinction, pledge cards were mailed to alumnae all over the country. These covered a range of local generations as well as residents from Illinois to Texas and from New York to California—a widespread conglomerate of women whose parents sought for their daughters a superior education and gentility in the tradition of the Old South.

Miss Mary Elizabeth Cayce, a one-time faculty member at Ward-Belmont, recalled the bolstering mood of confidence with which money-raising activities were undertaken. "We even sent Miss Morrison to Dallas to arrange for alumnae support."

The plan was to offer the Tennessee Baptist Convention what they had paid for the school and an additional figure, maybe around \$25,000, according to Patty. Cayce said, "What we tried to do was to persuade the Convention to give the alums a certain length of time to raise enough money to buy

back the school. Nashville businesses were also approached to lend financial support to regain Ward-Belmont."

Meanwhile, pledge cards, indicating significant support, started coming in the mail.

Efforts to negotiate with the recent purchasers for a time proved abortive. A breakthrough occurred when Baptist leaders agreed to call a meeting of key figures in the Convention to talk over matters with the Ward-Belmont representatives.

Among those spearheading the action, Ellen (Mrs. James W.) Hofstead echoed the then-current attitude of optimism. "We thought if the Baptist Convention realized how much the school meant to so many people, they would give it back. Such was not the case."

Nonetheless, at the appointed time of a March evening, a committee representing Ward-Belmont interests met with a group of the Convention leaders at the downtown Hermitage Hotel. Among those present were Patty, Cayce and Ellen as well as Ellen's husband, Jimmy, and Ferriss Bailey, both lawyers. The committee posed a question to the purchasers of the school. Could they look at the situation from the point of view of Ward-Belmonters?

The gist of the new owners' opinion was that no place existed in the postwar world of the 1950's for such an institution. There was no loss in the demise of the tradition-filled school.

One man among the purchasing group tried to ameliorate the stand of his colleagues by mentioning his understanding of the school and what it represented. He termed Ward-Belmont a good school with lovely young ladies. But the Tennessee Baptist Convention had no thought of giving up its prize.

Hopes to regain the school which had flared brightly and briefly had to die. A cherished, long-established institutional landmark had been hit by the whirlwind of progress and was to face the future as a coeducational, church-oriented school to be known as Belmont College.

"The last days at Ward-Belmont were so traumatic," said Miss Ella Puryear Mims who was completing her fourth year as a faculty member. "Everybody cried every chance we got. All the teachers and the students suffered through that last beautiful spring." The educational crisis brought forth early on Dr. Daugh W. Smith, a Nashville surgeon dedicated to preserving high standards in the field of education for girls. He and his wife, Lucile, had been looking forward to a Ward-Belmont education for their daughter, Cile. Mr. and Mrs. Foskett Brown initially expressed strong, supportive interest as did many citizens of the community.

Coincidence occurred in that Dud (Mrs. Foskett) Brown was a patient of Dr. Smith in March of 1951. Soon to be released from the hospital, Dud was visited by her physician who put the problem to his patient succinctly. "Are we going to sleep with this Ward-Belmont situation or are we going to do something about it? Let's call six or eight people and get a group together to try to accomplish something."

"I'm with you," was Dud's prompt reply. So Dud and Foskett Brown were in on the ground floor.

Local alumnae, in instant pain at the thought of the loss of the school, also responded to the crisis of the spring.

Organization of efforts began to take place when a meeting was held on March 17, ironically enough, in Acklen Hall of the school which had recently been sold.

Patty Chadwell recalls the meeting. "I remember Dr. Smith got up from his chair," Patty said. "He walked around and stood with his hands on the back. 'Now we've got to do something about this,' he appealed to the group. Daugh Smith was very instrumental from the first."

Dr. Smith, thinking in retrospect of the news of the transfer of Ward-Belmont, commented that the event was quite a jolt. "Individuals discussed what had happened at parties but nothing was said for a week or so of doing anything about the situation."

During the spring, according to Ellen Hofstead, "Certain people started thinking about what are we going to do. Ward-Belmont was the only good non-sectarian high school for girls in Nashville."

Meeting after meeting of people interested in a disciplined education for girls took place, many being held at Deerfield, the Browns' home. William Waller emerged as a key figure.

Explaining how he happened to be in the position of First Chairman of the Board, Mr. Waller cited the need of the

founding group for legal services "to obtain a corporate charter, look after the legal details of property acquisition, zoning matters, and so on."

He also added, "I was asked to take the post by some very lovely and charming ladies—among them: Dud Brown, Hortense (Mrs. O. H.) Ingram, Ellen Hofstead, Mary Elizabeth Cayce, Edith Caldwell, Kay (Mrs. Fred) Russell and Helen (Mrs. John) Bransford. *Some* men might be able to turn *such* ladies down, but not I. My powers of resistance were totally inadequate."

Horace G. Hill, Jr., a long-time supporter of George Peabody College for Teachers, and the late Edith Caldwell Hill, a cousin of Miss Annie C. Allison, beloved as principal of the high school department of Ward-Belmont, showed keen interest from the start. The George Bullards also belonged to the group with desires for a noteworthy education for their daughter, Louise (Dede, the late Mrs. J. Bransford Wallace). Hortense and Henry (Hank) Ingram early on added their support as did Fred and Kay Russell. The Russells had one daughter, Kay (Mrs. Earl, Jr.) Beasley as a junior in Ward-Belmont and another, Ellen (Mrs. Robert N.) Sadler, who was to have entered high school the next year. And two more girls, Lee (Mrs. John) Brown and Carolyn (Mrs. J. William, Jr.) Van Derveer, were to follow.

One meeting held at the Browns' home on Easter Sunday afternoon focused on the idea of forming a new school if Mrs. Susan S. Souby of Ward-Belmont would continue in her position as head. The junior high school class at Ward-Belmont was very outstanding, many people have noted. "The faculty and Mrs. Souby," Cayce pointed out, "were upset about the girls' being separated."

Kay Beasley recalled one meeting held at the Browns' home to which all of the potential students were invited. "I remember the meeting vividly. Mom (Kay Russell) gave us a pep talk about the new school and what they hoped to accomplish. All the girls got excited and everybody wanted to go there. What a relief! It was the first time we knew we had a place to go."

At this point everyone sensed that a new school was aborning.





Acklen Hall—Belmont College—1910



Physical Education Class—1920



May Day—1930



George Washington Birthday Celebration—1940



Arrival at Berry Field-1940



Horse Show-1941



Club House—1942



May Day-1946



Archery Class—1948



As You Like It-1947



Captivators—1948



These enterprising people "mulling over what to do," as Ellen Hofstead described the content of the many meetings, became pioneers, motivated by their sense of urgency to continue quality education for girls in the community. The trail they blazed led to the almost instant founding of a new secondary school.

One absolutely miraculous factor often overlooked in the historic episode is the speed with which this small, strong band of volunteers operated.

The brief, sorrow-filled days at Ward-Belmont were drawing to a close. "A sad spring, I'll tell you that," Patty commented recently. Moving evidence of that lies in Mrs. Martha Gregory's memory of Mrs. Souby at the last May Day performance of Ward-Belmont with tears streaming down her cheeks. (Martha is one of the Ward-Belmont faculty members who continued her teaching at Harpeth Hall.)

Besides facing an imminent deadline, the community-concerned individuals spearheading the opening of new educational facilities had nothing—absolutely nothing—tangible with which to work, only heads full of ambitious dreams. They were captains all, ready to command an uncertain craft over unknown seas.

A paramount question arose. Was Mrs. Souby available? While wondering about a key person to direct the new school,

"Somebody stumbled upon the information that Peabody had made Mrs. Souby a very fine offer," recalled Ellen Hofstead. "This galvanized us into action." A delegation went promptly to see the head of the high school department at Ward-Belmont. She confirmed the facts of the Peabody offer, saying she was thinking it over.

In response to the concept of creating a new school, the competent principal said she was interested in the possibility. Moreover, she was eager to do something for her Ward-Belmont faculty. She would definitely consider the idea of heading the new school. And she would ask her faculty to give thought to this venture as a way of continuing their teaching careers.

"What kind of a school will it be?" was the first question Ward-Belmont faculty members wanted answered, according to Miss Penelope Mountfort, Harpeth Hall director of guidance who was teaching at Ward-Belmont at the time it closed. They were assured that the new institution would be a college preparatory school in the tradition to which they were accustomed.

About the planning period, Patty said, "I don't think they would have attempted to start a new school, if it had not been for Mrs. Souby and her faculty."

"The main thing at the start," maintained Ella Puryear, "was that there was no question that we were *not* going with Mrs. Souby."

"Many parents showed interest," said Ellen. "When it became obvious that Mrs. Souby and her faculty would be available, we said we'd find a place to have the school."

Word began to spread around town that the seed of a new school was perhaps about to be planted. Kay Russell described the intense eagerness about the project, recalling, "Every day the telephone was ringing off the hook. 'Is it going to happen?' "

Kay also remarked, "The teachers from Ward-Belmont were willing to take the gamble if the girls would. It is really amazing the faith that those teachers had to do this."

One of the members of the first faculty at the new school, Patty Chadwell, said, "We were not told what we would be making. There were no contracts. It was all by word of mouth. No firm commitments at first."

The decision to open the new school was made before Ward-Belmont ended its final semester.

"We were fortunate in having the interest of people who wanted to be generous," Ellen Hofstead commented.

Finding a place in which to locate the new school became an immediate necessity. After having considered several pieces of real estate, the group decided to purchase the P. M. Estes, Jr. property at the intersection of Hobbs Road and Estes Avenue. The central location of this impressive home and spacious grounds had appeal. The price for the twenty-six acres and the residence was \$75,582.

The building committee appointed Hank Ingram as chairman to make improvements, additions and alterations to the recently acquired property with William Waller, Kermit C. Stengel and Mary Elizabeth Cayce as assistants. The architectural firm selected was Tisdale and Tisdale.

Active fund raising was launched immediately. George Bullard and Helen Bransford cochaired the fund-raising committee. Recalling the common bond of those involved in obtaining money, Ellen said, "There was great interest in the project. The ox was in the ditch. We had to give some reasonable evidence that we could buy the property."

Early responses proved gratifying. Ellen continued, "The closing of Ward-Belmont really did arouse people. They did not want a school like that lost to the community.

As Cayce put it, "We right away set about to do what had to be done [to open the new school]."

One task at hand was the selection of a name suitable for a private school for girls located with a view of the gently rolling Harpeth Hills of Middle Tennessee.

Some settler in the early days of this region's history had given the name of Harpeth to the sloping hills and little river valley which lie to the south of the campus. Focusing on this geographical position, Cayce suggested the name of Harpeth Hall.

The new school was to use green in combination with gray for its colors. Students later would come to associate the color green with the handsome magnolia trees which dot the campus. The trees, which did not exist originally, were planted later as part of Dr. Smith's landscaping efforts.

From the very start the stately grounds of the former Estes home challenged Dr. Smith. Today the loveliness of the flowers and shrubs and trees on campus stand as a significant tribute to his unflagging care and attention over the years.

In the infant days of the new school the picture looked quite different. The lovely mansion was surrounded by property which had suffered devastating damage from the ice storm of '51.

Mr. Waller asked Dr. Smith to take charge of what needed to be done to the grounds after the purchase of the property.

A tremendous amount of work lay ahead, according to Dr. Smith, who said, "The campus could best be compared to the Argonne Forest after World War I. The winter freeze had taken its toll. Hanging branches everywhere needed attention."

Dr. Smith was indeed a natural to get the place in shape. As a boy—the only boy in the family—he had helped his mother with gardening early on and had developed a love of plants, shrubs, trees, flowers—all growing things. The beauty of the grounds proves eloquent testimony of his love.

Dr. Smith recalled that he employed a man from Tritschler's Nursery who, for the sum of \$75, did the initial work on the property which had been officially acquired on July 1, 1951. The workman climbed the trees and cut off the dead branches. Then Dr. Smith had to find a way of getting rid of the branches.

"This was the beginning of my experience with the grounds. It's hard to visualize the state of the property when it was first acquired," he noted. "Between the two lower parking lots there was a dog pen. There was no access from Esteswood and people came up from Hobbs and went back again."

Dr. Smith has shown unstinting faithfulness to the cause of natural loveliness at Harpeth Hall. Now he is coaching a faculty member, Mrs. Jeannette Andrews, who possesses a green thumb, to help him maintain the grounds in the fashion to which everyone has become accustomed. What can be more delightful than being spoiled by beauty!

In addition to the cultivation of the campus, enormous needs in the line of school facilities loomed immediately. Lead-

ers for fostering the new school had already clearly emerged. The original charter members of Harpeth Hall were Daugh Smith, Foskett Brown, O. H. Ingram, Fred Russell and William Waller. Official incorporation had occurred in May, 1951, when Mr. Waller became chairman.

In addition to the residence, the sponsoring group had also acquired the small structure known from the first as the Senior House. Plans to build Little Harpeth for classrooms took shape immediately with the financing of \$125,000 through the National Life and Accident Insurance Company.

Contagious enthusiasm about the new school swept the community. Mary Elizabeth Cayce observed, "We had strong support due to the respect the community had for Mrs. Souby and for the caliber of people working on the project."

The original board members were elected to serve terms of different lengths of time. Those elected that summer to serve a two-year term of office included: Horace G. Hill, Jr., S. W. Berger, Jr., Mrs. L. B. Stevens, Mrs. Ralph Owen, Mrs. Douglas Henry and Mrs. Marvin K. Barry (Louise Sain Barry).

Hank Ingram, Daugh Smith, Ellen Hofstead, Sara (Mrs. Kermit C.) Stengel, Helen Bransford and Edith Caldwell (the late Mrs. Horace G. Hill, Jr.) were to serve on the board for three years.

William Waller, George Bullard, Hortense Ingram, Kay Russell, Dud Brown and Mary Elizabeth Cayce accepted fouryear terms.

Faith in the school's future prevailed. Patty Chadwell reflects the feelings of the former Ward-Belmont faculty members who were to carry on the long-standing tradition of academic excellence. "I don't think I ever had any doubts about the success of the new school. I never felt insecure. I never thought of *not* going, once they asked me."

The same confidence in the success of Harpeth Hall comes from Dr. Smith. "Many of us had no doubts about the success of the new school. Some thought it was a fly-by-night, emotional thing." One male patient who was solicited for funds by Dr. Smith responded, "I'm not going to put my money down the drain pipe." "But it was not many years," added Dr. Smith, "before people realized that Harpeth Hall was becoming a part

of the Nashville community."

The summer before Harpeth Hall opened in September, 1951, proved a busy time. Committee chairmen energetically expending efforts with a deadline close at hand included Hank Ingram, finances; Kermit Stengel, building; Daugh Smith, grounds; and Kay Russell, public relations.

"Everybody pitched in," recalled Lucile McLean, Harpeth Hall business manager who had also worked at Ward-Belmont. She had joined the group at Harpeth Hall because the school business attracted her.

"We did everything that was necessary," she said. "I remember one day being on a step ladder hanging a mirror [in the present office area] that somebody had given us.

"Looking back on it, I don't see how we managed, but everybody helped. I remember my sister's coming over and scrubbing down bathrooms because she wanted to help."

The myriad of details which had to be handled that summer of 1951 made Ella Puryear say, of the opening of the school, "It was a miracle."

Chairs were bought from a restaurant going out of business. Odd gifts of furniture, books, whatever, from an openhanded community turned up on the Hobbs Road property during the scant and busy months which lay between the closing of Ward-Belmont and the opening of Harpeth Hall.

Carl McFarlin, president of Tennessee Products, donated \$5,000 for the purchase of equipment for the chemistry laboratory.

Martha Gregory, present assistant librarian at Harpeth Hall, recalled that Margaret Newhall, Ward-Belmont librarian, donated books as did Billie Kuykendall, a member of the new school's English department.

The limited library facilities, crunched into the space which now houses two administrative offices, enjoyed for several years in the early period the services of an expertly trained librarian, Miss Eleanor (Eggie) Eggleston, who had been associated with Vanderbilt University.

Martha Gregory recalls that Miss Eggleston was a friend of Mrs. Souby. Mrs. Souby is credited with having said, "Can't you just dream of a time when you won't be teaching? Somehow I think taking charge of the library at Harpeth Hall will be

a wonderful thing for you to do when you're no longer at Vanderbilt."

And indeed when Miss Eggleston retired, she spent several years as librarian in the infant school. Without pay.

A temper of excitement dominated the fund raising which accompanied the flurry of activity on the new campus. Among the arch go-getters was George Bullard who proved himself a master. Kay Russell recalled that "touch" was Mr. Bullard's by-word. "Can I touch you for half again as much as you said you'd give?"

Scores of civic minded people throughout the area were contacted. A kind of chain reaction prevailed with interested persons calling on anyone who might likely spare a sum of money to make it possible to open the new school.

Much publicity accompanied the formal beginning of Harpeth Hall in September, 1951. Local news stories listed the names of all the faculty members as well as the entire student body. An air of high expectations predominated in the many photographs which were published in connection with the opening—Mrs. Souby surrounded by a corps of trail-blazing students, members of the faculty inspecting new construction on campus, girls clustered at the heavy stone gates marking the driveway, club presidents and their sponsors. The press duly heralded the advent of a school which would come to occupy a prestigious place on the Nashville educational scene.

When Harpeth Hall opened in that memorable September, former faculty members from Ward-Belmont at the helm included: Miss Vera Brooks, Miss Patty Chadwell, Mrs. Sophronia Eggleston, Miss Frances Ewing, Mrs. Lucy Fountain, Mrs. Martha Gregory, Miss Billie Kuykendall, Mrs. Lenora Litkenhous, Mrs. Ruth Mann, Miss Ella Puryear Mims, Miss Penelope Mountfort, Mrs. Margaret (Pat) Ottarson, Mrs. Madeline Terry, Miss Roberta Wikle and Miss Catharine Winnia.

They brought to the new school the air of gentility which had prevailed at Ward-Belmont. One faculty member had stains on her hands from picking walnuts so, when she taught her classes, she wore white gloves for a time.

One of the early comers to the rapidly established school, Driver Joslin, became an institution at Harpeth Hall, known to students for twenty-five years. He retired as head custodian in July, 1979.

On October 22, 1979, at a special assembly program Miss Polly Fessey, interim headmistress, gave Driver and Mrs. Joslin a check as a token of gratitude for his work at the school.

Dr. Smith, Chairman Emeritus of the Board of Trustees, participated in the program as did Carolyn Russell (Mrs. J. William, Jr.) Van Derveer, president of the Alumnae Association at that time, and Andrée Akers, the 1979-80 president of the Student Council.

Students, singing "Happy Birthday" to Driver, stood and clapped enthusiastically, demonstrating their devotion to a dedicated, "behind the scenes" staff member.

Another early comer to the campus was Mrs. Dorothea Griffin, who came to Harpeth Hall in 1954. She was the first addition to the faculty. Miss Violet Jane Watkins, Mrs. Betty Partee and Mrs. Elizabeth (Liz) Williams also joined the pioneer group of teachers within several years of the school's opening.



At the start of school Little Harpeth, sometimes called Little Ac by Ward-Belmonters who used the term from the name of one of the buildings on the old campus, was still under construction. "We were all huddled together until November." That was Lucile McLean's way of describing the entire new school in operation in the Administration Building.

The principal had already established contacts for the new school with college board associations and with admissions officers, resulting in the assurance that students of the new school would receive the same consideration as Ward-Belmont graduates so long as Mrs. Souby remained in the head post.

Behind the crowded academic scenes Lucile, housed first in the director's office, collected the money, paid the bills, sold text books and did the little secretarial work necessary such as typing Mrs. Souby's letters. "There were not many at that," she observed.

Among the faculty members who vividly recalled the pioneer days of Harpeth Hall is Miss Penelope (Penny) Mountfort who was *the* science department. She had spent all summer re-learning her chemistry. In August she resigned her new job in order to get her master's at Peabody, never dreaming that any difficulty about replacing her might exist.

Mrs. Souby prevailed on Penny to stay "a few weeks." "The few weeks became a permanent position," she recalled

several decades later. (Incidentally, she picked up the credits for the proposed master's in summer school sessions.)

At first Penny taught chemistry, biology, physiology and general science, becoming so busy that some days students brought her lunch to her. "I was too young to realize that the schedule was impossible," she noted.

Like all the faculty members and the strong band of community volunteers involved, Penny saw the culmination of mutual efforts to launch a new craft into the sea of education when Harpeth Hall opened officially in September, 1951.

School of necessity began with a short day for all five days of the week. (A short day consists of scheduling classes so that the ending of school occurs a little past the noon hour.) Classes were all held in Souby Hall. "For six weeks," Penny remembered, "there was no rain and all the students ate on the front lawn during study periods, paper bagging it."

"I know we could not have managed if the weather had not been perfect," Ella Puryear Mims stated. She began her Harpeth Hall teaching career of twenty-seven years in the tiny room on the second floor of the Administration Building which now serves as the office for student publications. The present sick room, which was shortly to become the kitchen, housed the algebra courses. Science courses were at the outset taught in what is the present office area.

Mrs. Gregory worked with the freshmen in the room where the office of the director of finance and development is located today.

Cayce recalled that lots of classes met outside. "Each had its own little tree."

"Some of us had study hall in the Mole Run," (the name given to the basement area where the photography laboratory is now located), one pioneer student noted.

As for the first days, Polly Jordan Nichols, currently alumnae director and a member of the second graduating class at Harpeth Hall, remembered that there were no negative feelings about the new school at all. "I think Mrs. Souby had a lot to do with that. The teachers were marvelous, and there was an attitude of 'We're all in this together.' With all the girls here now, they seem to lack something of that special feeling we had in those days."

Anne Carter (Mrs. John C., Jr.) Brothers commented that everyone knew everyone else. "We were like a family," she said.

Admiring the dedication and competence of the teachers who formed the first faculty of Harpeth Hall, Kay Beasley stated, "We got such a marvelous, classical education."

The supportive attitude of the students came as no surprise to Kay Russell who had given pep talks to the girls who would be the pioneers of the new school. "You are the originators of Harpeth Hall," she had told them. And she added, "They all ended up in the same thing, in a very close relationship. The girls had wonderful school spirit. It was *their* school, and they had helped start it. People forget how you can make it if you have to."

Certainly the idea of "making it" prevailed in the infant school community which was to grow steadily stronger, making a significant impact on Middle Tennessee.

The heart of the initial operation lay in the office of the director. (Mrs. Souby preferred this title to principal or headmistress.) She shared the office with Lucile McLean. The present business office of the school, upstairs in the Administration Building, served at the very start as a classroom.

The first library occupied the area to one side of Souby Hall, now used for offices for the dean of students and director of guidance.

There was one telephone for all of Harpeth Hall and it sat discreetly on the desk of the director.

Thoroughly immersed in the academic aspects of the new school, Mrs. Souby had no desire to be involved in the financial end of the school. She left this to other, able hands. "She didn't know what people gave," Patty Chadwell remembered. "All students were alike to her regardless of what their parents gave."

Patty echoed the general feeling which prevailed about Mrs. Souby. "She was a marvelous person to be able to talk to. She was never too busy if a faculty member wanted to see her. The Board never said anything to her about the way she ran the school from an academic standpoint."

Ella Puryear Mims spoke of the beloved director also. "Her door was always open to faculty members and to students. You

could always go in. She kept the parents off the faculty."

In fact, in the dawning days of Harpeth Hall, "Parents did not talk to teachers," Dorothea Griffin reported. "They brought their complaints and criticisms to Mrs. Souby."

Long exposed to educators and administrators through her public school superintendent-father, Dorothea reflected the thinking of many. "Mrs. Souby was the most remarkable woman I have ever known. Her feeling was that once she had hired someone, that person would absorb by osmosis what she needed to know about how to do the job and how to live up to Mrs. Souby's expectations. You came here to teach, and you did your best. I have always felt Mrs. Souby lived up to all my notions of what an administrator should be."

Anne Brothers, from the student's point of view, described Mrs. Souby as "warm, tender and caring." She recalled the daily sessions she had with the director who helped her bring her grades up.

With such dedicated acts as this, the director's schedule made many demands on her. Yet she was very even in temperament, Ella Puryear asserted. "She had so much on her mind that she would often say, 'I'll think about that tomorrow.'"

As a board member recalling Mrs. Souby, Ellen Hofstead pointed out the fairness, which marked Mrs. Souby as an administrator, and her loyalty to her faculty. "She was truthfully very loyal to the people working for her. She was a very fine headmistress. A very superior person. Of course, she was of the old school. She won respect everywhere."

"Everyone was totally devoted to Mrs. Souby," said Penny Mountfort. "She was my mentor and brought me up as a young teacher. Once you were hired at Harpeth Hall, everybody trusted you to do the job well."

Kay Beasley, a member of the first senior class, echoed the praise for the first head of Harpeth Hall. "I felt that Mrs. Souby was a true lady. She set a perfect example for her students."

Mary Elizabeth Cayce, noting the esteem in which the director was held, said, "It is strange in a way that Mrs. Souby was so revered. She was a very low-keyed kind of a person. Not aggressive at all. She never spent a penny she didn't have.

She cut corners. She had no drive, no inclination to spend."

Much of this tendency reflects certain aspects of Susan Souby's life. Widowed at an early age, she had two young sons and very little money. (Her husband, Armand Max Souby, had been alumni secretary at Vanderbilt University where he had also been a professor of history.) Mrs. Souby attended classes at George Peabody College for Teachers, thereby training herself for an educational career which was to win her the love and respect of the entire community. She proved to be a highly competent leader in the founding days of Harpeth Hall.

Upon her retirement, at the testimonial dinner given in her honor, Mrs. Souby received a supreme tribute from Mr. Waller.

... the real credit for the success of The Harpeth Hall School goes to the lady we are here to honor tonight. Mrs. Souby was persuaded to accept the position of principal or headmistress or director of the new school. She in turn persuaded a corps of fine teachers who had been at Ward-Belmont to join her. She had the vision to believe that the school *could* succeed, the courage to embark on the new venture, and the will and industry to *make* it succeed.

Mrs. Souby was indeed a leading spirit in the early days when many dedicated, ambitious individuals blended their efforts to make superior education available to young girls.

A mixture of human energy and interest erupted at the outset, making possible the many valuable additions which former Ward-Belmonters had taken for granted. Mr. Waller described the situation when the group had decided there was to be a new school. ". . . an irrestistible force was . . . set in motion which propelled the school into being." While many generous contributors gave in terms of money, a large number of others contributed time and materials to go toward the needs of the new school.

Mr. Robert (Pup) Doggett gave Harpeth Hall its tennis courts. He had the hill levelled and brought in rocks and laid the courts. Chairs of various kinds constituted some of the miscellaneous contributions which added significantly to the venture. Walter Richardson helped with the driveway. Walter Seaman of the Methodist Publishing House donated hymnals. Mrs. John Early, Kay Russell's mother, gave the school bell. Norvell and Wallace Lumber Company provided the lumber

for the pole for the bell. Mrs. Early's granddaughter, Kay Beasley, called up the memory of Miss Roberta Wikle's ringing the huge bell for classes to start. Phil Kerrigan donated the iron letters spelling out Harpeth Hall for the main entrance. Other generous-hearted citizens responded to the needs of the school.

So, in innumerable ways, people, excited at the prospect of having a new independent school for girls on the Middle Tennessee landscape, gave great impetus to the beginning of the educational institution which was to carry on the tradition of long-cherished Ward-Belmont.

Among the early donations was Harpeth Hall's first flag which came from Lucile McLean and her daughter, Mrs. Mary Shepard of Memphis. The flag had arrived home on the casket of Lucile's husband, James McLean, Lieutenant, United States Army, who was attached to the staff of General Douglas MacArthur. He was a World War II fatality. Originally the flag flew from a tall pole in the present garden area of the campus.

Routinely trespassers and pranksters cut the rope for the pulley. On a weekly basis the fire department paid a visit to the school to fix the flag. One day Lucile's daughter suggested moving the flag to the front of the Administration Building—certainly a suitable and less threatening location which is still used for the "stars and stripes" today. "A nice ceremony was held for the first flag raising," Lucile remembered. "The Student Council was all grouped together. A very impressive ceremony."

The giant-sized efforts and contributions of time, money and materials sent Harpeth Hall into operation as a non-profit, independent, preparatory school for girls with many enthusiastic parents watching the infant. Kay Russell recalled, "Everybody was hovering over the school all that year."

The first student body included fifty seniors, thirty-nine juniors, forty sophomores and thirty-two freshmen, all sardined in the Administration Building.

SENIORS: Harriet Anderson, Norma Andrews, Anne Armistead, Joan Askew, Martha Ann Barrick, Barry Bennett, Donnie Berger, Beth Blackard, Dorothy Ann Cochran, Penny Creighton, Karin Dale, Norma Davis, Becky DeWitt, Sally Duke, Marie Duncan, Nancy Frederick, Dixie Glover, Carole Grant, Trudy Grimes, Ceacy Henderson, Anne Hitchcock, Nancy Ann Holt, Fifi Hunter, Jill Jakes, Jean Johnson, Sally Jordan, Debbie Luton, Monty MacCue, Marilyn McDaniel, Mary Sue Miller, Peggy O'Callaghan, Mary Virginia Patton, Nancy Perry, Lacy Phinizy, Barbara Ann Pratt, Madeline Reynolds, Georgia Rice, Hank Rose, Nancy Rule, Kay Russell, Nancy Sager, Corinne Scales, Sarah Sharp, Beverly Smith, Peggy Smith, Anne Sterry, Sandy Travis, Patsy Warterfield, Georgeanna White, Marian Williams.

JUNIORS: Kathryn Alexander, Binnie Barr, Nancy Bauman, Ann Bradford, Mary Rose Bradford, Sally Ann Brothers, Dede Bullard, Peggy Casparis, Anna Lou Clark, Mary Carol Cockey, Ruth Eleanor Corn, Sally Estes, Julia Fort, Jean Fuller, Dean Gillespie, Nan Gore, Caroline Gregory, Betty Hunt, Katie Jarratt, Polly Jordan, Nancy Lassiter, Kitty Lowe, Bebe Macey, Joanne Manley, Gloria Mayer, Susan Moore, Marilyn Noel, Margaret Oliver, Kay Olmstead, Mary Ready Parrent, Betty Pirtle, Tina Provine, Betsy Riddle, Ruth Gay Robbins, Mary Schlater, Suzanne Smith, Amelia Spickard, Connie Stevens, Betty Lou White.

SOPHOMORES: Peggy Black, Jane Blackwelder, Judy Brooks, Betty Brothers, Catherine Browder, Carolyn Carr, Martha Casey, Frances Cheek, Betty Clements, Charleen Creagh, Linda Cummings, Frances Douglas, Cornelia Faust, Sara Dee Goodloe, Martha Grizzard, Ann Harwell, Peggy Hill, Joanne Hooper, Eleanor Hovey, Gene Jarman, Ann Kirkpatrick, Bebe Larsen, Jane Lee, Eve Loser, Joan Loser, Allister McDougall, Berenice Miller, Bebe Minton, Ginger Morehead, Gardner Orr, Judy Pond, Sue Gray Ransom, Gertrude Sharp, Mandy Simpson, Peggy Smith, Sandra Sutherland, Mary Faith Templeton, Corneille Tidman, Ellen Wills, Kay Woodard.

FRESHMEN: Rosalie Adams, Ann Benton, Mary Knox Berger, Marjorie Brevard, Glenda Brooks, Pie Campbell, Jane Clark, Lou Cowan, Beth Creighton, Sissy Davis, Martha Douglass, Virginia DuBose, Gayle Elam, Florence Fletcher, Peggy Harwell, Ann Huddleston, Harriette Husband, Suzy Johnson, Fran Keltner, Lissa Luton, Eunetta Mayberry, Ray Napier, Mary Noble, Jackie Richardson, Peg Robinson, Ellen Russell, Frances Sanders, Liz Smith, Nancy Smith, Florence

Stumb, Milbrey Waller, Katie Wray.

Not long after the opening, students were singing the original Harpeth Hall Alma Mater. Martha Gregory, English teacher on the first faculty and now assistant librarian, took on the responsibility for producing the school song. Her freshman class eagerly contributed sentiments which best expressed feelings about the school. "What do you really want to say in this song?" Mrs. Gregory quizzed the girls time and again and recorded their comments and their probings on the blackboard. Meter and rhyme from Martha served to set their ideas into the lovely, well-beloved Alma Mater.

Two generations of students have sung these familiar words:

O Harpeth Hall, O place beloved, Thy beauty crowns the hills; In strength and grace thy walls arise Above the woodland still. Our voices ring with happiness, Our hearts are filled with pride, As here each girl finds for herself The joys that will abide.

So light of heart and free, we pledge Allegiance through the years, And old girls with the new girls share The pleasure that endears. Thy standard from the hilltop waves In dark magnolia green And of thy destiny so fair Proud privilege to sing!

Along with the Alma Mater an emblem became a necessity for the fledgling school. Mrs. Souby and Pat Ottarson took on the project. The graphic results show an ancient Greek lamp burning against an open book, supported by a staff flanked by a decoratively curved design. The Latin motto reads, "Mentem spiritumque tollamus." ("Let us lift up the mind and spirit.") This reflects the high goals of the institution.

Beth Creighton (Mrs. Robert E., Jr.) Harwell, a member of the first freshman class, recalled, "Of course, we never went to Ward-Belmont, but we had all heard about it and were looking forward to Harpeth Hall."

Although heirs to the Ward-Belmont legacy, students at the new school found that all practices did not carry over to Hobbs Road. Seniors did not have the privilege of going out to lunch! This deprivation caused dismay—even anger—and in a few cases, some girls slipped off the campus to nibble forbidden lunches despite the rule.

Compensation occurred, however. Smoking in the Senior House was allowed. Patsy Warterfield (Mrs. Robert) Des Prez admitted, "We all smoked in those days." Over the years that practice has been discontinued in the Senior House.

Although now abandoned, another practice of the early days at Harpeth Hall mandated that every student arrive thirty minutes before the beginning of the school day for vocabulary drill one day a week. "It seemed like a lot more than one day a week," one of the pioneer group recalled. "We tried to be late and miss the vocabulary altogether."

Liz Smith (Mrs. James O., Jr.) Bass recalls the class projects. Every class had landscape duty. The girls brought their mothers' gardening gloves and trowels. The first freshman class at Harpeth Hall had the task of digging the onion weeds out of the overgrown garden area. "What hard work!" Liz said. "Was it ever a major project!"

Another memory shared by the first-comers to the campus centers around club competition. Corinne Scales (Mrs. Ernest B., Jr.) Franklin recalls clearly that the citizenship cup went to the Eccowasins the first year. As club president, she laughingly noted that she "fussed at members for making even a slight disturbance in study hall." Chewing gum on campus chalked up a major.

In those days disturbing study hall constituted a minor offense in the eyes of the Student Council. Even just speaking one word!

Meeting a boy on campus—even speaking to a boy on campus—earned a major for the daring student.

Lissa Luton (Mrs. William H.) Bradford, a member of the first freshman class, now laughs at the rule forbidding speaking to boys on the campus. This grew out of the Green Hornet episode. The Green Hornet, an automobile belonging to an MBA student, one day cruised through the campus many times. One of the Harpeth Hall students waved and hollered at the boys. This action produced the rule that no student was allowed to speak to a boy on the campus.

"There was no testing for acceptance then," Lissa also noted.

Beth marked the attitude which prevailed in the pioneer project. "We had the feeling of doing something special. We were very proud of every aspect of our new school."

Looking on the early days, Lissa stated, "I recall Harpeth Hall as being fun. The new school had to make its reputation with colleges. We worked hard and a lot was expected of us, but there was never any pressure in those days about getting into college."

Ellen Sadler also remembers the challenge that the curriculum presented. "Homework was really hard."

Georgeanna White (Mrs. John G.) Payne concurred. "I lost five pounds over the homework." Even with the large workload, the new school could offer little in the way of facilities for studying during the first years. Georgeanna mentioned that studying was sometimes done in a bathroom or "just sitting in the middle of the floor" if one could find a space not being used for classes.

Patsy Warterfield Des Prez of the first senior class at Harpeth Hall is another who has clear memories about the workload on students. "The homework almost killed us," she admitted, laughing about it now. "The school was trying so hard for accreditation."

And students had to carry all of their textbooks all of the time. No lockers had been installed in the beginning. Florence Stumb (Mrs. Lipscomb, Jr.) Davis remembered that the father of one particularly small student threatened to sue the school because of the load his daughter was carrying.

Relief came in due time. "I remember how excited we all were when lockers were put in the basement," Ellen Sadler said.

With all the books and large amounts of homework, Florence noted the narrow range of subjects offered at that time. "There was no choice the freshman year. But all of us were able to take Glee Club."

In these first small classes a closeness and intimacy existed in the student-teacher relationships. "They (the teachers) cared for us. They really liked us," Florence asserted.

For example, she pointed out the girls' love for Miss Penny.

Florence recalled that her class made a trip to Oak Ridge for science which Miss Penny taught. "That was a big deal," she said.

The then-fledgling group also recalls the great strength of the honor system at Harpeth Hall. No cheating and no stealing took place to cloud the early days.

Lissa further remembered that the matter of getting into college was "all very informal." No testing was required although students headed for eastern colleges had to pass college boards.

Corinne Franklin added, "You could go anywhere you wanted to go." She was automatically accepted at Vanderbilt with Mrs. Souby's approval. After her first semester she went into advanced studies.

One member of the first freshman class never went to college. The class shares moving memories of its outstanding member, Katie Wray. She died on February 14, 1952, after a courage-filled illness of several years. As a memorial to this student, the Katie Wray Award is presented each year to the senior with the highest academic average. Her classmates strongly urged the administration to establish this memorial for the remarkable, widely-loved student.

As the school was spreading its wings, many new rules arose, necessitated by the new environment. During lunch some of the students took to walking down near the Will P. Kirkman residence on the original Estes property, facing Estes Road. "Down at the grapevine" was the way some members of the first freshman class phrased the location of this diversion. In time a new rule was implemented, forbidding students from going beyond a clearly distinguished point on the campus during lunch—in case of a phone call from home.

Another new rule emerged in the early days. With a great consciousness of George Washington evoked by the annual birthday celebration, within a few years after Harpeth Hall opened, a group of students one February burst into song of cheerful greeting for the first American president. "Happy birthday, dear George, happy birthday to you!" Presto! Mrs. Souby requested that there be no happy birthday songs to George Washington.

The fountain became a focal point for discipline also. In

the early days great sport centered about calling someone to look down, leaning far over, into the fountain to see the frog or the spider or whatever. A simple twist turned on the water spray and drenched the unsuspecting victim.

The practice came to a resounding halt when a faculty member became the unlikely target of a dousing. And, of course, a new rule went into effect that firmly forbade turning on the fountain.

Another rule which indicated the prevailing gentility of the early period concerned sun bathing. Skirts could be pulled up only to the knee. This era also produced a minor trauma about whether a student might be allowed to wear a kilt to school. (Since there were no uniforms until the 1970's, popular attire at that time included bobby socks pulled high up on the calf so as to touch the hems of the long skirts in vogue at the time.) Members of the first freshman class recalled having voted on one occasion to have uniforms consisting of middy blouses and skirts, but this was ruled out as unnecessary.

And there were also some antics. As Florence Davis aptly put the students' attitudes in the early days, "We were free spirits before it was fashionable to be that way."

One day a group of seniors popped popcorn. They were caught. Mrs. Souby interviewed individually every member of the senior class, asking the same question, "What do you think your citizenship grade should be?" A hard question to answer!

Members of this class have remembered with amusement the overcrowded conditions at the school. Lissa Bradford said, "I had math in the kitchen with the pots and pans on racks." Study Hall occupied today's Junior Room as well as the area which is now used for the office. A familiar sight in Study Hall was the director herself. She tutored all subjects except biology, taking a special interest in the freshmen. In this way she came to know each student and her potential through first-hand experience.

Expansion came with the opening of Little Harpeth in the fall of 1951. Ella Puryear Mims recalled, "We all felt a great relief when we moved into the new building."

This move enabled lunches to be served at school. Gone forever were the days when students put their little paper bags on shelves in the kitchen and had their packaged lunches handed out at the appropriate time!

Instead the girls were seated at tables, each assigned to her own place. "We were absolutely incensed about that," Florence Davis stated strongly. "Before that we had been free to eat in many places on the campus and with whom we chose."

The carrot sandwiches that were served sometimes came to Ellen Sadler's mind. "We didn't like them very much," she admitted.

"We got mad about the food," Florence reminisced with amusement. "One day Mrs. Napier, the mother of Ray (Mrs. George P. III) Walker, brought hamburgers from The Krystal—405 or some such number. And the administration didn't say a word. They knew we'd soon run out of mothers who would do that."

At this time Mrs. William C. Binkley started serving memorable food on campus. "We had plate lunches and it was like going to the Centennial Club. The girls didn't like it. They complained that they had to eat mushrooms and almonds," Patty Chadwell reminisced.

Ella Puryear recalled the spinach, topped with hard-boiled eggs, and other delicious dishes. "The faculty enjoyed the lunches thoroughly and the girls wouldn't touch the food."

The controversial meals were served in the area where the copying equipment is now housed on the first floor of the Administration Building. The present day sick room, where initially classes had met, served as the kitchen. The students ate in the Junior Room, in the work room and in the office area.

On the other hand, the faculty lunched in the conference room (the sun porch). "The girls in the library next door often sent in to ask for quiet," reported Ella Puryear with a twinkle in her eyes.

Change of quarters came for Lucile McLean with the opening of Little Harpeth. She moved from the director's office to her present quarters upstairs. Here she collected all the money for Harpeth Hall, recorded all the grades (a task which she faithfully performed until the academic year of 1979-80) and did all the secretarial work necessary. Lucile sold all the text books at first for cash. Since this system necessitated making change, billing replaced cash sales after the first few years.

Lucile has streamlined the book sales so effectively that today a student carries a sheet with all textbooks listed. Each student checks off the books purchased and hands her sheet to Lucile who has presided over the operation through all the years. Today teachers man the tables filled with new, colorful texts in the cafeteria, helping students collect their armloads of material to be studied. In addition, Lucile has throughout the years received the shipments of books in her office after the teachers have submitted lists of requirements in the spring of the previous school year.

Finances at Harpeth Hall tend to be overshadowed by the other aspects of school operation but, in truth, they hold a key position in the institution's history. In this area was Vernon Nelson who began his work for the new school in the summer of 1951. He served as business manager, having held the position of treasurer at Ward-Belmont.

Lucile recalls that a system of auditing the books was implemented immediately for her own protection as well as for that of the school. She recalled with pleasure some of the "interesting, competent treasurers" in the school's past, "George Bullard, Horace Hill, Bill Morehead, Wendell Phillips, and others." They set the policy for spending and Lucile consulted with them "on expenditures of any size."

At first she consulted Mr. Waller and later Dr. Smith who became the second chairman of the Board at the end of the school's first five years. As business manager behind the academic scenes Lucile has put in countless hours—even on Saturdays and on week ends—especially during the opening of school. And she has never had any regrets about leaving the bank for Harpeth Hall.

One incident related to the business office indicates the unique and effective means of obtaining the necessities in the early days. When Lucile first moved upstairs to the office she has been occupying through the years, George Bullard realized her need for chairs because he had no place to sit down when he came to talk to her. At a board meeting George announced, "Mrs. McLean needs chairs." He threw a five dollar bill on the floor, saying, "Come on, everybody, chip in." The funds spontaneously collected bought the two chairs which remain in the business office today.

In the beginning days Lucile ground out dittoes for teachers on early manual equipment for copying.

Random buying of expensive items was not the order of the day at the start of Harpeth Hall. As Dorothea Griffin recalled, "Mrs. Souby was always used to getting along on very little. Nothing was bought for the school in the way of decorations." "We made do," Mary Elizabeth Cayce explained.

"Making do" certainly applies to the physical education program in its initial stages. The gym classes under the direction of Patty Chadwell stand out notably for their uniqueness. One staff member remembered that Patty directed hopscotch and rope jumping in the driveway of the school. Running up and down the long driveway provided another means to physical fitness. Patty described the first gym program, "Everything was outside. We walked most of the time. I walk pretty fast. We went around Estes and Esteswood."

Beth Harwell remembered going up and down the driveway, holding a hockey stick in the "at ready" position. Of course, there was no athletic field but "Miss Patty wanted us to be ready."

"Miss Patty taught us how to cross our legs and how to walk upstairs," Ellen Sadler stated. "During the first years of the school—without the needed facilities—Miss Patty thought of everything she could to occupy our time."

Remarkably enough in the face of no actual facilities for physical education, a lively program developed due to Patty's ingenuity. Volleyball became possible when she strung up a net between two trees on either side of the driveway. The students played basketball on Saturday mornings at Robertson Academy, being scheduled according to clubs to which they belonged. Mrs. Pat Neblett (G. William) Moran, a recent Ward-Belmont graduate who was finishing her last year in training at Peabody to be a physical education teacher, came out to help Patty with the basketball—for no pay. "She felt as the rest of us did," said Patty about this young volunteer who has now chalked up about twenty-five years of service in the physical education department of Harpeth Hall. "She wanted the school to go."

The infant athletic program added tennis as courts were built that first year. Another addition was ping pong. Patty set up one table in the Mole Run, a small area in the basement of the Administration Building. Beth Harwell still laughs about the games. "We hit the ball and put down the paddle and raced around the table so the next girl could have a chance."

Ping pong proved beneficial to Polly Nichols, now alumnae director at the school and a member of the junior class when the school opened. She explained, "Mother was very athletic. She had two athletic duds for daughters. (Polly has a sister, Sally (Mrs. R. D.) Minnigan who was in the first graduating class.) We always participated poorly in athletic events, but at the Mole Run ping pong table—well, I got a letter! My one big athletic accomplishment!"

Storage space down in the Mole Run served as the locker room for two years with a fan providing ventilation.

Patty recalled acquiring lockers from Richland Club which was making some changes. Burke's sporting goods store, a familiar landmark on Church Street, was going out of business so Harpeth Hall's physical education director obtained additional equipment there such as Indian clubs, paddle tennis paddles and other items—all at greatly reduced rates. "I pled the pauper's oath," Patty recalled with a smile.

Excavation and laying of the athletic field came in perhaps the second year. Surveying the scene, Patty said at that time to Dr. Smith, "But there is no grass."

"There's going to be grass by the time you need it," Dr. Smith assured her. And there was. "He was marvelous from the word go about getting things done," Patty added.

Lucile McLean recalled that the early athletic field was not fenced in and the neighbors' children rode horses on the grounds. They made great holes in the surface.

The addition of the Bullard gym in the third year of the school expanded the activities of the physical education program enormously. George Bullard chaired the fund raising for the gym. Harpeth Hall was his first experience with a public project. "A very personable and capable man," Dr. Smith termed him, amused at George's effective techniques. "When funds ran short for the building, Bullard would call donors and say, 'I'm raising your pledge so many dollars.' And it usually worked."

Based in the Bullard gym, the physical education program

has shown a gradual and significant development over the years. With the addition of this new wing, air conditioning became a reality on campus. The initial personnel can recall the sultry heat of the first years.

Even without facilities a strong intramural program existed from the first. "There was always a tennis team. No problem there," Patty stated. "Basketball competition was with parochial and out-of-town, independent schools. Push came from parents for us to join the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association. Track came next on the interscholastic basis and then volleyball and cross country in that order," stated the well-known, veteran physical education teacher. "And we did compete in a couple of swimming meets—state high school meets—not the TSSAA."

From its minute beginnings the physical education department now uses two full-sized gymnasiums. That staff includes three physical education teachers, a dance director with parttime help and academic faculty members who serve as coaches.

As the athletic program maintained the standards established by the now defunct mother school, Ward-Belmont passed on traditions in many ways. Social clubs bearing the original Ward-Belmont names for the day student groups—Angkor, Ariston, Eccowasin and Triad—offered membership to every Harpeth Hall student. "The clubs in the beginning of Harpeth Hall were very important and strong," Beth Harwell noted. "Almost like little sororities. There was a lot of spirit. Intramural competition was very exciting. We had cheerleaders and everybody attended the games. You went into a real depression if another club beat you!"

Besides a large percentage of the club members, faculty also attended every sports event.

Club sponsors at the outset included: Ella Puryear Mims for the Eccowasins, Lucy Fountain for the Angkors, Penny Mountfort for the Triads and Ruth Mann for the Aristons.

A system of points for rating citizenships also followed the mother school's pattern as did the annual Step Singing which had been held in front of the big Academic Building on the Ward-Belmont campus. The Lady of the Hall, a title given to the senior most representative of the ideals of the school,

replaced Ward-Belmont's May Queen. The old custom of holding a May Day in the late spring perished in the changing scene.

The Lady of the Hall, however, from the first has presided over a court patterned after the Ward-Belmont May Day. Representatives of each of the four high school classes serve as maids. In recent years seventh and eighth grade students from the Middle School act as pages. A sixth grader serves as crown bearer. Young daughters of alumnae, or faculty or friends of Harpeth Hall are chosen each year to be flower girls.

Interestingly enough, Edie Hofstead (Mrs. Robert) Cabaniss '65 of Richmond, Virginia, daughter of Ellen and Jimmy Hofstead, great supporters of the new school, was the crown bearer in the final May Day at Ward-Belmont. The first crown bearer at Harpeth Hall was Patsy Delony '66, daughter of Chase and Jane Delony and a niece of Patty Chadwell.

The honor of being the first Lady of the Hall went to Donnie Berger Creighton. Kay Beasley's scrapbook contains a newspaper picture of the honored student with her court. In full-skirted gowns, the attendants included Sarah Sharp Taylor, Louise Bullard Wallace, Frances Cheek Bispo and Ellen Russell Sadler. Eve Loser Orr and Joan Loser Cherry served as heralds in the first court at Harpeth Hall.

Class Recognition Day, Junior-Senior Day, the structure for student government and the annual tea dance, which has been abandoned with the advent of different lifestyles, may be numbered among the Ward-Belmont traditions which became immediately and firmly entrenched as integral parts of Harpeth Hall.

Another custom from the days of Ward-Belmont which carried over to Harpeth Hall has a familiar sound to decades and decades of graduates—the senior class pledge of loyalty to the school.

We will respect and obey the school's laws and we will do our best to incite a like respect in those about us who are prone to annul them or set them at naught. We will strive unceasingly to quicken our mutual sense of duty.

Thus, in all these ways, we will transmit this school, not less—but greater, better, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

"Carrying on traditions was an important factor in the new

school," Penny Mountfort recalled. "The small faculty and the small student body was unified and close. Traditions helped."

Tradition, combined with adaptation to a new environment, prevailed at the school's first graduation. Kay Beasley's scrapbook contains a newspaper picture of the hoop-skirted seniors, arms laden with red roses. The South Lawn of the campus provided the scene for the impressive ceremony which was held on Wednesday, June 4, 1952. Formal invitations to families and friends had preceded the occasion which was to mark another milestone in the history of the new school.

Kay recalled that the seniors faced the porch at the back of the Administration Building and proceeded through the area now known as the Junior Room to receive their certificates.

A printed program, also from Kay's scrapbook, notes that the Glee Club sang several songs and that the speaker was Madison Sarratt, then Vice Chancellor of Vanderbilt University.

Nancy Sager (Mrs. R. J.) Heyl took top-flight academic honors, graduating first in the class. Other scholastic honors went to Corinne (Mrs. Ernest, Jr.) Franklin and Sally Minnigan.

What excitement surrounded the occasion of the first graduation! The first senior class presented the school with a check for the purpose of buying a piano. In assuring the students that indeed a piano would be obtained immediately, Mrs. Souby reminded them, "This time last year we didn't even have a school."

She spoke to her first graduates, "I have the pleasure of addressing my first graduating class and my first group of alumnae at the same time."

Notable among her commencement comments were the words, "We shall pay our debt to the past by putting the future in debt to us."

Only a few days before, Harpeth Hall's first senior dinner had taken place in the Administration Building in what had been the old dining room. Kay Beasley, remembering that the tables had been arranged banquet style for the program, was able to produce copies of the class history. Entitled "The Seafarers" and written by Nancy Heyl and Sally Duke (Mrs. William) George, the chronicle of their academic years

together included a brief retelling of the closing of Ward-Belmont and the founding of Harpeth Hall. Sally Minnigan wrote the class poem for Harpeth Hall's first graduates.

These graduating seniors as well as other pioneer students treasured the first yearbook of Harpeth Hall which continued the name of the Ward-Belmont annual, the *Milestones*. The slim volume, done on a slimmer budget with much help from Benson Printing Company, had Sally Minnigan as its editor and Kay Beasley as business manager. Kay has as a keepsake the little informal note imprinted on the front with the name of Miss Kuykendall, the sponsor. Inside the note reads, "Welcoming you to the staff of Harpeth Hall's very first yearbook."

Kay remembered that she "took a lot of snapshots for the annual."

The 1952 *Milestones* indicates the presence of the Presidents' Council, the Athletic Association, the Student Council, Penstaff (literary organization) and the Honor Society, all preserving portions of student life at Ward-Belmont.

Penny Mountfort who sponsored the Biology Club recalled that lots of clubs existed on campus—"maybe too many." Besides the Glee Club, special interest groups included art, chemistry, French and Spanish.

The Ward-Belmont Garden further preserves thoughts of the mother school. In the beginning an overgrown rose garden with two lily ponds and an inoperable fountain lay to the left of the driveway. Dr. Smith saw to the reworking and redesigning of this now lovely area which helps to carry on the valuable traditions of the past. Ellen Hofstead suggested that this area on the new campus be named the Ward-Belmont Garden.

More history centers around the entrances to the office of the director of physical education and to the chapel in the new McMurry Center. These entrances contain the original doors from old Ward Seminary, formerly on Eighth Avenue.

The doors were a gift of the grandson of the founder of the seminary also named William E. Ward. He presented the elegant and history-filled gift to the school when he removed them from the Clarendon Avenue home in which he had lived and which his father, also William E. Ward, had built.

In giving the doors to Harpeth Hall, Bill Ward indicated that he and his father had picked them up for \$10 from wreck-

ers who were tearing down the old seminary building. He hoped they would be used in a Harpeth Hall building and that hope became a reality in September, 1977, with the completion of the McMurry Center.

Although there was no celebration of George Washington's birthday, so well known to Ward-Belmonters, during the first years of Harpeth Hall, early on the program became a highlight of the school calendar.

Patty Chadwell deserves the credit for devising the Harpeth Hall version of this tradition. During the third year of the new school the program was revived, involving freshmen only. Liz Bass was Harpeth Hall's first Martha and Florence Davis had the role of George. Both were members of the junior class, sister class of the freshmen. "The program grew out of the things the students had learned. I first conceived of the program in that way," Patty said in explaining that she had taught marching to the freshmen and made use of this exercise in the George Washington celebration.

"A few of the costumes had been salvaged from Ward-Belmont," the director of physical education recalled about the launching of an old celebration in a new environment. "At the time the girls wore evening dresses with big, wide skirts. Shawls over the shoulders took away from the evening-dress look. Suit coats turned inside out to show the satin linings served as attire for the colonial gentlemen. And I have used pajama pants from time to time. I think we made most of the costumes. Frances Ewing was a ring leader in this project. Pat Ottarson and Sophronia Eggleston helped also."

Contributions of all the faculty toward making the program a success provided only a small sample of the closeness and cooperation which existed in the new school. "A great cooperative effort," Patty called the venture.

Among the teachers fired with high enthusiasm about the program was Martha Gregory, member of the English Department and sponsor of the freshman class. She had her students reading about the period. Each one selected a person that she wanted to be and did research on him.

"One year," Patty said, "they all wanted to be Thomas Jefferson so I said to Mrs. Gregory, 'Hold off. You've oversold Thomas Jefferson.' "Mrs. Gregory's students also wrote in-

vitations to the parents. She used the program as a teaching tool.

In due time sailors were added to the George Washington celebration. Patty recalled the year when a new set of pants was needed. Her sister, Jane Delony, spearheaded the sewing operation which took place in the big, vacant room where the language lab is now housed. Six or eight mothers brought in sewing machines. Patty cut out the material ahead of time. They made the costumes in one day.

As classes have grown larger, a lot of costumes have been donated. "If a girl didn't like the color or the cut of her gown, I encouraged her to get her mother to make a costume," commented the director of the celebration. "Sometimes the girls made costumes themselves and donated them."

Clothes on other occasions as well have occupied the students' interests. The hoop-skirt tradition for graduation dresses prevailed for some while. Reminiscing about the exercises for the graduating class of Harpeth Hall, Georgeanna Payne remarked, "It was a pretty sight." She remembered the bouquets of red roses—"a dozen at least. The stems were all tied with red bows. I put mine in a tub of water when I went home."

Liz Bass brought to mind the fact that Miss Ewing used the hoops from barrels. "To go to Sewanee for the week end, you took the hoops out and rolled them up in the skirt." And she added, "Oh, the agony of the merry-widow!"

Patsy Des Prez has not forgotten some of the inconveniences of beautiful attire. "Girls often had to sit by themselves in the back seat of the car because of the hoop skirts."

The starched petticoat also required special attention. Corinne Franklin remembered putting the garment out to dry over the boxwood tree.

And on the academic side, perhaps the greatest stride of all made by Harpeth Hall as an infant school was receiving accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools after only one academic year. "Receiving accreditation the first year after the school had opened set some kind of a record," Mary Elizabeth Cayce said. And Dr. Smith noted, "I would say that early accreditation was due to Mrs. Souby and her staff."

The far-sighted headmistress had asked Martha Gregory to go to the School of Library Science at George Peabody College for Teachers for a full year to get sufficient hours (twenty-two or twenty-three) for Harpeth Hall to gain accreditation. The association required a trained librarian as a staff member for its qualifying schools.

Ella Puryear Mims described the mechanics involved in this remarkable achievement for so young an institution. "We had a grand time. The Southern Association representatives spent three days visiting the campus. The large committee talked to all of the faculty and to the student body. They were impressed with the morale of the students. The girls were very supportive of the new school."

As early as 1953 the board asked Blanche Henry (Mrs. Herbert) Weaver to spearhead the effort to have an alumnae association formed. The matter of drawing up a charter and other items pertinent to welding the school's graduates into a bona fide group made headway in 1963. The constitution was adopted in 1964. Linda Williams (Mrs. Robert V.) Dale '56 became the first president of the Harpeth Hall Alumnae Association. She served for ten years.

This step, among many, clearly evidences the pattern of growth vividly demonstrated in the history of Harpeth Hall.

As Harpeth Hall grows, ties with the mother school continue to manifest themselves clearly as in the case of the first reunion of the Ward-Belmont Alumnae Association held in March of 1968. An overwhelming crowd of 800 graduates, representing many parts of the country as well as Tennessee, gathered for their first official day meeting on the campus of Harpeth Hall.

Among the Ward-Belmont alumnae attending was Miss Polly Fessey of the college class of '43. The renewal of her friendship with Miss Idanelle McMurry, Harpeth Hall headmistress at that time, ultimately resulted in Miss Fessey's acceptance of the post of director of the Middle School.

Minnie Pearl (Mrs. Henry Cannon who had attended Ward-Belmont) entertained the entire group at a picnic featuring fried chicken (what else?). A cocktail party given by *The Tennessean* at Belle Meade Country Club and a banquet at the Armory also provided fun for the Ward-Belmont alums.

Mary Elizabeth Cayce recalled Miss Catherine Morrison, long-time head of the physical education department at Ward-Belmont, who appeared on the program attired in the old-fashioned, baggy bloomers.

Even though the huge assembly had managed to be seated for dinner, the noise level of the chitchat persisted over the call for order. Miss Morrison blew her whistle! Instantly quiet prevailed as alums were momentarily transported back to their student days when that whistle meant order.

Activities for Ward-Belmont alumnae at the Hobbs Road property are being planned to cement further the strong bond between the two schools.

HARPETH HALL FOUNDERS—1951



Foskett H. Brown



O. H. Ingram



Fred Russell



Dr. Daugh W. Smith



William Waller

HARPETH HALL SCHOOL HEADS



Susan S. Souby—1951-1963



Idanelle McMurry-1963-1979



Polly Fessey—1979-1980



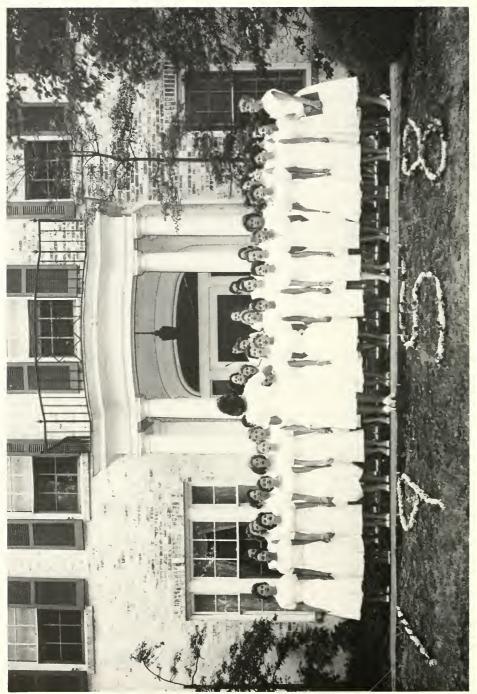
David E. Wood-1980-



Souby Hall



English Class—1951





Lady of the Hall-1962



Annie C. Allison Library—1965



Athletic Association—1962



George Washington Celebration—1965



Fountain in Ward-Belmont Garden—1968



Daugh W. Smith Middle School-1968

CLASS OF 1976



Senior Class Officers—1976





Library-1975



Middle School Student Council—1975



25th Birthday Party—1976



McMurry Arts/Athletics Center—1977



Arsenic and Old Lace—1980



Dance Studio—1980



Biology Lab—1980



Sixth Grade Social Studies—1980



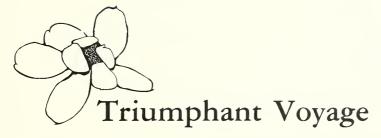
Winterim Trip to France—1980



Cross Country State Champions—1980







When the new school had been in session for twelve years, Mrs. Souby announced her retirement to become effective July 1, 1963. At that time she became Headmistress Emerita and the name of Souby Hall was officially given to the Administration Building.

A testimonial dinner on May 15 of that year at Belle Meade Country Club evidenced the devotion and respect which the first headmistress of Harpeth Hall had generated in all of the witnesses to her competence and dedication. The occasion packed the club with former students and their parents, members of the Board (past and present), faculty members, those currently attending the school and well-wishing friends.

Mr. Waller, speaking for the Board, praised Mrs. Souby's dominant role in the founding of Harpeth Hall. In clear-cut prose he pronounced her the key figure responsible for the success of the school which had risen in a brief span of time to occupy an admirable place in the community.

Dr. Madison Sarratt of Vanderbilt University who had maintained a long-time interest in Harpeth Hall acted as toast-master for the impressive occasion.

Ella Puryear Mims, as spokesman for the faculty, ably and sincerely added words of praise and devotion for the retiring director.

Not only did Mrs. Souby receive a new automobile as a

farewell present but a check for a trip to Europe as well. In all the time she served at Harpeth Hall the principal had never taken a vacation!

And who was to carry on as headmistress? A search committee was formed to find a new director with Sue (Mrs. Joseph) Ivie as chairman. Others serving with her included Hortense Ingram, Blanche Henry Weaver, Mary Elizabeth Cayce and Ellen Hofstead.

Cayce outlined the procedure involved. "Sue got preparatory school guides, selected the fine schools and asked headmistresses for suggestions. A number of names came through that. Some seemed possible. Some were hopeless.

"People entertained the prospective heads. They came from Connecticut and from California—from all over really. We interviewed a lot of prospects and were getting fairly desperate."

A breakthrough came from May May (Marion—Mrs. Fred) Hamilton who saw Sue one night en route to a basketball game. "I've been wanting to call you," May May said enthusiastically. "I know a person who will be marvelous for Harpeth Hall when Mrs. Souby retires and you need somebody."

Sue replied that the need existed at that moment. May May suggested a Ward-Belmont alumna, Idanelle McMurry from the Kinkaid School in Texas.

Cayce could recall no Ward-Belmont student by that name. Arrangements being made to have the candidate visit the school solved the identity crisis. Betty (Mrs. Gerald) Sheridan of Cookeville, with whom the new prospect was to stay, referred to her guest as "Sam." Of course Cayce remembered her from Ward-Belmont days immediately! Miss McMurry was a native Tennessean whose home was in Cookeville.

Reporting on Miss McMurry's official visit, Cayce said, "I was overwhelmed. She was most attractive. I remember she wore a black wool coat with a little ermine collar. She made an immediately good impression."

With Miss McMurry's acceptance of the post as headmistress, school spirits soared. Here was somebody who would circulate in the community, and concentrate to a great degree on public relations for Harpeth Hall. "Sam was to put Harpeth Hall on the educational map," Cayce commented. "It has been

a paramount help to the school to have her travel to meetings (of various school associations). She has represented the South and the school with great credit. I say unreservedly that the school could not be what it is today if it had not been for Sam McMurry."

In reviewing for students a history of Harpeth Hall in an assembly program the year before she resigned, Miss McMurry recalled that in the summer of the first year she came to Harpeth Hall she wanted to get a letter out to parents only to discover that the ditto machine was the only duplicating machine available. Purple lettering for parents! Hardly . . .

Also, the school had no secretary. A part-time secretary began work in the fall of Miss McMurry's first year. Up to that time the present office area had been used for study hall.

That staff has increased gradually to include two downstairs secretaries and a secretary who operates the IBM word processor on the second floor of Souby Hall.

The coming of Miss McMurry to Harpeth Hall brought about many effective changes. To cite only a few, she instigated the custom of having heads of each department. A Mothers' Auxiliary was born and proved its usefulness. The practice of faculty members of independent schools in the Nashville area holding meetings provided a means of exchange of ideas of mutual interest. Miss McMurry implemented longer grading periods and the use of deficiency slips to inform parents promptly about students' needs for help before grades in formal report cards brought word of doom to the homes.

Harpeth Hall faculty members began to enjoy greater participation in the programs of the Mid-South Association of Independent Schools. In the early 70's, the school began its innovative Winterim program with Pete Minton as its first director. Studies during the month of January spin off from the regular curriculum followed during the rest of the year. Electives of a wide variety give students the opportunity to pursue guitar playing, gourmet cooking, specialized reading and conversation in foreign languages, to mention only a few examples. Junior and senior students may either travel in one of the educationally-oriented, school-sponsored tours abroad or in the United States or pursue practical apprenticeships in business and professional offices in the Nashville area. The work

experience proves valuable since students have an early opportunity to try their hands at what might become future careers.

Penny Mountfort observed of Miss McMurry's administration, "With Sam something was always happening. New buildings. New programs. She is an excellent administrator and knows what ought to be done." And indeed she did make many additions and alterations.

Adhering to the Ward-Belmont tradition, Miss McMurry unfailingly demonstrated great dedication to the highest academic standards.

Along with the many changes which have occurred over the years, new buildings and improvements have altered the face of the campus. A static quality has never characterized Harpeth Hall. After the initial building of Little Harpeth which provided six classrooms and a lab came expansion of that structure. The Bullard gymnasium, named for the man who industriously campaigned for funds, allowed a regular indoor-type physical education program within several years of the start of the school.

By 1961 an auditorium and new classrooms had been built. From the original little cluster of classrooms and a lab, Little Harpeth has now expanded to include the Louise Bullard (Dede) Wallace Educational Wing which opened in January of 1977.

The academic library was completed in 1965. The story on that comes from Dr. Smith who related that he came into the Administration Building one morning in the sixties and found girls on the floor of the entrance hall. He asked the headmistress why they were there and she replied, "There's no place in the library for them. All twenty seats are taken."

"You must be kidding!" exclaimed the aghast doctor.

"No, I'm not," Miss McMurry responded. "They're waiting to do their homework."

"Then we've got to have a library," Dr. Smith said. "There's no question about it!"

At the next board meeting the question of the library came up. Some opposition arose and a warm discussion followed. Finally the die was cast to add another building to the growing school.

In launching an effort to replace the mini-library in the

overly-crowded conference room, Dr. Smith said, "We worked on plans for a good, long time. Sam sent the plans to her friend, Miss Pauline Anderson, head of the library at Choate (now Rosemary-Choate in Wallingford, Connecticut), and a school library consultant. She returned lengthy comments and criticisms." John Charles Wheeler served as architect for the building which was completed in 1965.

"Miss Anderson was invited to attend the dedication," continued Dr. Smith. The date was set to coincide with her trip to Memphis.

"The thing that stands out in my mind is that Miss Anderson was so impressed with the window sills. Tennessee marble was used on the inside and stone on the outside. There was no wood which suffers deterioration from precipitation. Miss Anderson couldn't get over it. I'll have to take credit for that.

"Replacing the windows in the gym had been quite a job. Those window sills had been replaced with brick. Using marble and stone in the library cost only a little more than wood."

Dr. Smith remembered that Miss Anderson later wrote him from Chattanooga about her pleasant visit to Harpeth Hall. She stated, "The library is second to none in secondary schools in this country and I've seen most of them."

The building is named in honor of the widely beloved principal of the high school department of Ward-Belmont, Miss Annie C. Allison, who had initially owned and operated Miss Annie Allison's Girls' Preparatory School. Old timers can remember the concept of gentility and good breeding with which "Miss Annie" imbued her students. Over the years comes back her dictum about politeness.

"Politeness is to do and say
The kindest thing in the kindest way."

A fitting memorial to a lady of the old school, the stately, white brick structure now contains 14,000 volumes, numerous periodicals and audio-visual materials. The lower level offers classrooms for sixth graders.

Another exciting expansion on the growing Harpeth Hall campus was the Middle School built in 1968. Ellen Hofstead recalled, "As for the building of the Middle School, there was a real need for it in terms of education in order to have students better prepared when they entered as freshmen."

Dr. Smith reinforced the idea that the Middle School came into being to meet a real need. "Less than one half the entrants at Harpeth Hall come from Ensworth. Harpeth Hall has drawn students from Franklin, Gallatin, Columbia, Dickson, Lebanon, Ashland City and Centerville. Many outlying areas send students here as well as the Metro system. The prevailing feeling at the time was that girls would benefit from the introduction to the Harpeth Hall curriculum at an earlier level. Mrs. Souby told me it took three to six months for ninth graders to learn how to study. 'After that,' she said, 'we get down to real business.'"

Dr. Leonard B. Beach, Dean of the Graduate School of Vanderbilt University at that time, chaired a committee to consider the advisability of academic expansion to include two additional grades. Mary Elizabeth Cayce, Douglas Henry, Jr., Mrs. William Flanagan and Dr. C. P. Johnston worked with him, determining that a need did exist.

Another major aspect concerning the addition of a Middle School was finding a director. Miss Polly Fessey, loyal Ward-Belmont alumna, agreed to accept the position. Following her graduation from Vanderbilt University, she had returned to Ward-Belmont to teach accounting and business law in the college department for seven years until the school closed.

Plans to offer further educational service to the community led to the immediate action of providing suitable quarters. "They built the Middle School in an amazingly short time," said Miss Peggy Herring, director of finance and development since April, 1974. "I've heard that the day school opened Miss McMurry and Miss Fessey were carrying in furniture so the students would have some place to sit."

The addition to the campus, containing classrooms for the seventh and eighth grades as well as a cafeteria which all of the student body and the faculty members use for lunch, opened on schedule in September, 1968, despite a delay of some days in finishing the cafeteria area.

About that problem, Miss Fessey had this to say, "Lunches were still being served in the old cafeteria area. That first day of school came the shocking realization that both the Upper School and the Middle School had been scheduled for lunch in the same place at the same time. This brought about a frenzied,

last-minute change when I announced, 'This is not fifth period. We're going to lunch instead.' "

The approximately 140 students in the seventh and eighth grades were off to a successful start in their Harpeth Hall academic careers, with twelve faculty members, a secretary, and Miss Fessey as director. The Middle School was completed with the addition of the sixth grade in the fall of 1971.

"The aim of the Middle School," noted Miss Fessey, "is to prepare students for the Upper School by an early involvement with the Harpeth Hall curriculum. The overall aim is to try to develop students as individuals—as people—as well as to strengthen them in academic areas. The Middle School is a great lab for cultivating the capacity for leading and for following as well. Skills such as note taking and listening receive emphasis in the program.

"It is exciting to see girls develop as personalities and to see growth in academic areas."

The records of the girls as they go on to the Upper School tell a great success story.

The Middle School has the same resources and the same social clubs as the Upper School. A separate Student Council governs the girls. With the advent of additional grades on campus, the physical education department expanded its program to offer sports. "At first," Miss Fessey said, "the competition in athletics was limited to the four clubs and to the seventh and eighth grades. Now the emphasis on athletics offers a full-blown program with participation in the Harpeth Valley Athletic Conference."

"Girls who make the B team in softball and in basketball receive coaching from two teachers. Any student who wants to participate in athletics can do it because the teachers make the opportunity available. Students for the most part exhibit great enthusiasm for activities which demand close supervision of the faculty. Teachers try to give the students 'girl-sized' responsibilities," according to Miss Fessey. "For example, if a club is to undertake a service project, the girls handle that."

Within the Middle School, however, not much interaction between the three grades exists except during Interim, a brief period of one week in January which does mix all three levels in its special offerings. The Lady of the Hall ceremony provides a link for the lower grades' girls with their high school sister classes in that the seventh and eighth grades each elect a page to serve in the court. Sixth graders elect a classmate to be the crownbearer in the ceremony.

Honor Day marks the transition to the Upper School with the graduation of eighth grade students.

In addition to preparing the girls for the Upper School curriculum, the language program includes three days of French or Latin for seventh graders and five days for eighth graders.

Looking as a teacher at the addition of the Middle School, Ella Puryear Mims states, "The Middle School has provided better preparation for the students. A lot of students are prepared in French. The Middle School has a big influence in advanced placement (the system for students to receive college credits for high school courses). AP is the fifth year of a language. Before the Middle School, students in language started Latin as freshman and French or Spanish as sophomores or juniors. And now it is possible to teach some additional kinds of history because ancient history is given in the Middle School. Some science is also started there."

An additional plus, Ella Puryear pointed out, is the fact that freshmen entering the Upper School are already used to the campus. "At first, before we had the lower grades, the girls were cowed and scared."

The Middle School bears the name of Daugh W. Smith in recognition of his unstinting efforts over the years to assure Harpeth Hall of the best possible quality as an educational institution.

Patty Chadwell observed, "Dr. Smith is the one person with a sustained interest in the school. He has been there the whole time. I know there couldn't have been anybody that worked harder or cared more for this school. He's been wonderful. Daugh Smith has continued from the start with his interest in and dedication to Harpeth Hall."

In addition to the Middle School, a new complex named the Idanelle McMurry Center now graces the southern end of the campus. "It is the finest in any school," Dr. Smith said. "Something we can be proud of." Overcrowded conditions necessitated the building. All of the students could not get into the old auditorium with its seating space of about 400. Also, the old auditorium did not have a full-sized stage and the need for one had arisen. And "The Bullard gym alone proved inadequate for present-day needs," Dr. Smith observed. "Another need was a place for dance which has helped tremendously in the arts program."

Now the McMurry Center offers a stage on which the school can present amazingly good productions in the Frances Bond Davis Auditorium. The very fine art department has greatly enlarged facilities. The Marnie Sheridan Art Gallery provides an attractive area for exhibits, augmented by the Wendell Phillips Balcony at the entrance. The Catherine E. Morrison Gymnasium relieves the pressure of inadequate space for physical education activities. The center also includes a spacious dance studio with mirrored walls.

The center, of course, honors Idanelle McMurry. The announcement of the decision to rename the Arts and Athletics Center afforded a greatly moving moment in the graduation exercises of June, 1979.

The McMurry Center opened for operations in the fall of 1977. Ground breaking had taken place May 20, 1976. Dr. Smith recalled the paper model for the latest campus improvement which Miss McMurry kept in her office. The firm of John Charles Wheeler, which had designed the library and the Middle School, originally did the architectural planning which was completed by Frank Gower.

Barbara Massey Clark '56, Edward and Carole Minton Nelson '56, Gayle Elam Smith '55 and many others worked on the fund raising.

By the time the center was completed Dr. Smith had become Chairman Emeritus and a life member of the Board of Trustees. John S. Beasley, II assumed leadership of the Board in February, 1977.

Although Dr. Smith has officially resigned as president, he has not retired. He is continuing his services to Harpeth Hall. Commenting on his participation in the growth of the school, he said, "It has been a lot of work but it's been a lot of fun. You can see the results of your efforts. There's great reward in that."

The McMurry Center regularly houses the student body of the Upper School for assembly programs during the week. On special occasions the Middle School attends simultaneously.

Instead of assembly, the first students had chapel (a Ward-Belmont term) once a week. This opened with the singing of "We Gather Together To Ask the Lord's Blessing." Different preachers from around town addressed the student body. In the early days each speaker stood in the doorway between the present office and the work room areas into which the girls crowded for the sermons.

Florence Davis remembered a quartet composed of herself, Liz Bass, Ann Benton (Mrs. Robert) Northcutt and Lissa Bradford who rendered such selections as "In the Garden" and "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name."

Beth Harwell of this same vintage recalled the lack of concern for money among the students whose spirits were ministered to during chapel. Constant fund raising by means of bake sales, Duds' Days (a small fee buys permission not to wear a uniform) and other projects had not come into existence. "Money was not something we dealt with much," said Beth.

Social life on campus also reflects a different mind set now with combos and sock hops held in the semi-darkness of the gymnasium where bands blare forth the contemporary music.

Gone are the days of the annual tea dances. The Student Council sponsored this affair, another in the long line of Ward-Belmont traditions. Penny Mountfort, sponsor of the Student Council at one time, remembered that decorating the gym was a real project. The dance for many years took place before the Christmas holidays. (At that time the examination period was scheduled for January.)

Members of the Board and the girls' escorts received formal invitations. Ella Puryear Mims recalled, "The entire faculty went. Girls presented their dates to the teachers who sat on the sidelines. Both students and faculty members wore white gloves."

As for fashions of the early fifties, students wore hem lines long, suede loafers and bobby socks. Now uniforms are the dress code.

Another aspect on the changing scene concerns curriculum. The sixties brought a mild form of protest from the

students with the request for electives. Economics, psychology and social sciences, for example, vastly increased the number of courses offered. Out of this decade in which many American campuses, especially at the college level, experienced traumatic changes in student attitudes and lifestyles, came the Student-Faculty Committee, designed to further closer relationships between the girls and the teachers.

At that time Harpeth Hall adopted the present uniform—classic-styled shirts and short skirts with options about colors within a specified range. Uniform slacks become apparent on campus during the cold weather. Penny Mountfort reviewed the dress code, saying, "Pantsuits had surfaced in the sixties and decisions about what were jeans and what were not jeans became harder and harder to make with the prevalent informal dress of the times."

The seventies also brought the Cum Laude Society to the campus. The Honor Society to recognize students achieving academic excellence had always existed on the Harpeth Hall campus, following the tradition of Ward-Belmont. Pat Ottarson had sponsored the Honor Society for twenty-one years.

Cum Laude was installed with appropriate ceremonies on April 30, 1973. John Hancock Cooper, for twenty-two years head of the Kinkaid School in Houston, Texas, and at that time president of the Southern Association of Independent Schools, made the Cum Laude Address. Herbert Moore, who had been headmaster of Holland Hall in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for eight years at that time, installed the Harpeth Hall Chapter into the national organization recognizing academic excellence at the secondary school level.

Another sign of progress came to Harpeth Hall in the late 1970's in the form of short-term courses for adults. Already programs have been offered for citizens of the community in dance, literature and creative writing. Additional continuing education courses will feature art and drama. Harpeth Hall is moving right along with the nation-wide trend to have education from the cradle to the grave.

Early in 1979 unexpected news stunned students, teachers and the entire Nashville community. Miss McMurry, after sixteen years as headmistress, announced her resignation to assume the head post at The Hockaday School for Girls in Dallas, Texas.

A beautiful testimonial dinner by the faculty in her honor at the University Club in May evidenced the enormous admiration and respect which Miss McMurry had earned at Harpeth Hall.

Further honors came to the headmistress at the lovely testimonial dinner given by the Board at Maryland Farms Club. Invitations were sent to everyone who had ever served on the school's Board.

And what of the ship on the high seas with no captain? Miss Fessey graciously agreed to leave her beloved Middle School and became interim headmistress of Harpeth Hall, calmly and competently bridging the transition period. During this time she won the admiration and affection of the Upper School faculty to such a degree that a standing ovation was accorded her when John Beasley praised her work at a faculty meeting. At the 1980 commencement exercises Miss Fessey received the Dede Wallace Award for Distinguished Service to Harpeth Hall.

Mrs. Dan Ellen Maples, administrative assistant of the Middle School, ably took over the reins as interim director in Miss Fessey's absence.

Key people, who have had their eyes on the future in recent times include Mrs. Jeanne Pilkerton Zerfoss, chairman of the search committee to find a new head for Harpeth Hall, and her assistants, Robert W. (Bob) Kitchel, Patricia Ingram (Mrs. Rodes) Hart, Blanche Henry Clark (Mrs. Herbert) Weaver and James W. (Jimmy) Perkins, Jr. The result of the search has produced another innovation in the history of Harpeth Hall. A headmaster has assumed the key position on the campus.

David Ernest Wood, formerly head of UMS Preparatory School in Mobile, Alabama, officially took over the leadership of Harpeth Hall in July, 1980. He has returned to the area which he has known as home and where his many friends and admirers have welcomed him cordially. Mr. Wood served as Director of Admissions at Vanderbilt University for twelve years before going to Mobile. Prior to that he had taught English and algebra at Battle Ground Academy.

In considering his high regard for the role of the independent school in secondary education, Mr. Wood recalled his

own high school years. "I feel that possibly the best thing that ever happened to me was for my parents to call me in in the summer of 1950 to discuss my future education. We were living in a small town in Georgia and they were not pleased with the school system. They decided I should go away to boarding school."

A list of 200 independent schools presented the teen-ager with various options. "There was nothing in the A's that interested me. In the B's there was something called Battle Ground Academy which caught my eye. My parents put me in the car and brought me to Franklin. The four years there had more impact on my life than almost any other experience."

From that time on Mr. Wood wanted to be involved in secondary education.

Mr. Wood regards his position at Harpeth Hall as an exciting challenge, coming at a time when there is only a handful of good day schools for girls in the South. Believing in education without distraction, the new head has in mind no merger or change. Optimistically he has pointed out, "We've got so much going for us—all in all—the finest of physical plants, a gifted faculty, loyal alumnae, supportive parents, friends in the community and the best reputation in town."

So with the advent of a headmaster, the future of Harpeth Hall begins unfolding, building on the past.

Note About the Author

Louise Douglas Morrison was graduated from both the high school and college departments of Ward-Belmont School. She received her B.A. degree from Vanderbilt University.

After having been out of college for almost twenty-five years, the author went to graduate school and earned her M.A. and Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, where she lived for many years.

Prior to her marriage Mrs. Morrison was associated with *The Nashville Banner*. She is a former member of the faculty of Case Western Reserve University and she also served as director of Christian education at Christ Episcopal Church, Shaker Heights, Ohio.

The author taught in the department of English at Harpeth Hall from 1976 to 1980.

A free-lance writer, Mrs. Morrison contributes to national juvenile magazines such as *Highlights for Children* and to various periodicals of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and of the United Methodist Publishing House.

Simon and Schuster has published her two monographs for students, the subjects being J. R. R. Tolkien and Shirley Jackson. Mrs. Morrison writes each year for the Annual for *The New Book of Knowledge*.

She participated in a Case Western Reserve program of continuing education for adults for many years and has brought her interest in this type of involvement to Nashville by offering courses for adults at Harpeth Hall.











